



Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2024. 20(4): 643-654

DOI: 10.13187/me.2024.4.643

<https://me.cherkasgu.press>



The Model of Cultural Identity, Represented in the Russian Cinema of the second half of the 1980s – 2010s

Roman Salny^{a, *}, Anastasiya Katrich^a

^a Rostov State University of Economics, Russian Federation

Abstract

The article reflects the results of a comparative hermeneutical analysis of Russian feature films of the second half of the 1980s – 2010s, including the study of cultural and historical contexts in order to consider their possible influence on the author's views, reflected in the specifics of the depiction of characters and reality, in the choice of plot motifs and other structural components of the film.

Based on the results of the analysis, we describe and systematize film images, types of character relationships and plot motifs that reflect the prevailing "points of view" about cultural values and traditions, and characterize stereotypical models of social interaction between characters in accordance with the five types of cinematic discourse (interpersonal, artistic-aesthetic, religious-ideological, historical-cultural, mythological) that make up the content of the structural-functional model of cultural identity developed by us

The analysis of research on the topic of the article has shown that the cultural traditions formed in centuries-old history were (with all the known losses) preserved in the Soviet period, remain relevant in modern conditions and are reflected in the feature films of "perestroika" and post-Soviet time.

Keywords: cinema, culture, identity, Soviet Union, "perestroika", Russia.

1. Introduction

From the mid-1980s to the 2010s, Russia experienced events that led to profound transformations in the social, political and cultural life of the country. The processes of decomposition of the state system and the dying of the communist ideology, which began in the perestroika years, led to the destruction of ties with the historical past and the present, the loss of not only common perceptions of life, but also the need to search for its meaning. In the post-perestroika period, Soviet values, built in the paternalistic system of socio-political relations, were actively replaced by democratic values, focused on individual freedom and responsibility, the market economy developed, which stimulated the formation of a consumer society in the 2000s and 2010s, there was a stratification of society, increasing economic, social and cultural inequality.

During this period, the image of Russian cinema was rapidly changing under the influence of a number of factors: the demythologization of Soviet history, changes in the systems of aesthetic and ethical evaluations, a spiritual and moral crisis, the borrowing of Western (Hollywood) film forms and genres, the commercialization of the film industry and the increasing share of mass cinema. All conditions have arisen for the weakening of its ties with national culture. Despite this, the basic features of Russian cultural identity were reflected in Russian cinema.

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: roman_tag82@mail.ru (R. Salny), shahanskaya.anastasia@yandex.ru (A. Katrich)

2. Materials and methods

The article reflects the results of a comparative hermeneutical analysis of Soviet and Russian feature films of the second half of the 1980s – 2010s, including the study of cultural and historical contexts in order to consider their possible influence on the author's views, reflected in the specifics of the depiction of characters and reality, in the choice of plot motifs and other structural components of the film.

The technology of hermeneutical analysis of feature films in historical and cultural contexts that we used is based on the scientific developments of A.V. Fedorov (Fedorov, 2013; Fedorov, 2015), A. Silverblatt (Silverblatt, 2001: 80-81), and U. Eco (Eco, 2005: 209).

The phenomenon of cultural identity as a property of the human psyche is revealed in the systemic unity of discursive practices reflecting traditional and innovative for public consciousness forms and ways of relations between man and man, man and society, society and nature, constituting a system of functional blocks (which we formulate as interpersonal, social and being), ontologically connected with the processes of a person's search for his own place in society and the formation of his sense of cultural belonging.

Based on the obtained results of hermeneutic analysis of Soviet and Russian feature films of the second half of the 1980s – 2010s, we described and systematized film images, types of character relationships and plot motifs that reflect the prevailing "points of view" about cultural values, traditions and, characterizing stereotypical models of social interaction of characters in accordance with the five types of cinematic discourse (interpersonal, artistic-aesthetic, religious-ideological, historical-cultural, mythological).

3. Discussion

Certain aspects of the problem of cultural identity representation in Russian art cinema in the second half of the 1980s – 2010s were presented in scientific studies of the construction of the human image and socio-cultural reality on the Soviet and Russian cinema screen, carried out by culturologists, film historians and historians:

– A.M. Maler points to a trend towards an increase in Christian motifs in Soviet cinema of the 1970s and 1980s. In his opinion, it was caused by "an appeal to traditional culture through the development of Russian patriotism in general and the gradual actualization of the values... of the Russian people, kin, and especially the native family" (Maler, 2023: 215);

– A.S. Breitman considers the problem of preserving values and describes the leading trends of Russian culture in Russian cinema of the late XX – early XXI century. Drawing on the traditions of Russian artistic and philosophical thought, he characterizes the "axiological core" of Russian cinema, which is based on Christian virtues (Breitman, 2004);

– according to N.A. Khrenov, "in late Soviet cinema, man seems ready to overcome atheism and to revive Christianity" (Khrenov, 2022: 45-46). This occurs in the conditions of the destruction of the "Soviet empire", which provoked the spiritual impoverishment of the people, the onset of the era of "alienation of the people from the authorities, society from the state, man from society and the individual from himself" (Khrenov, 2022: 48);

– A.G. Kolesnikova analyzes the portrayal of the Soviet past on the screens of "perestroika". She shows how the attitude to socialist values has changed. Grotesque and absurd images of party figures appeared in the cinema, Soviet leaders appeared pathetic and comical, filmmakers ironized the propaganda slogans that lifted the spirit of the Soviet man (Kolesnikova, 2021);

– I.V. Chelysheva in her article about the artistic cinema of the "perestroika" era on the theme of school describes the fundamental transformations associated with the social role of the school in society, the alienation of the world of teachers and the world of schoolchildren, the atmosphere of indifference and formalism that emerged in the pedagogical society (Chelysheva, 2017);

– M.I. Brashinsky describes the impact of democratization and liberalization processes in the Soviet state and society on the language of Perestroika-era cinema. He points to the rupture of filmmakers' ties with their own artistic tradition and national culture, caused by the borrowing of postmodern elements, genre forms developed by Hollywood, and the lack of a strategy for artistic and creative activity (Brashinsky, 1994);

– Y.A. Parkhomenko analyzes the influence of cultural traditions on the dramaturgical and genre uniqueness of Russian cinema. In her opinion, the tendency of modern filmmakers to replicate "Hollywood schemes" and exploit superficial characteristics of the "Russian character" is alien to the Russian mentality. At the same time, "the problems of personality, human relationships

and virtually the entire spectrum of ethical issues continue to dominate in modern cinematic works" (Parkhomenko, 2009: 138);

– V.V. Voskresenskaya considers the reflection of the peculiarities of national identity in the depiction of the natural landscape by post-perestroika cinematography. In her opinion, "the characterization of the Russian muzhik's mentality is inseparable from what surrounds him and where he comes from – his native land... Harmonious rootedness in the landscape of the homeland determines the hero's living of his life" (Voskresenskaya, 2024: 540);

– V.F. Poznin examines the problem of interaction between "cultural globalization and national mentality" in Russian filmmakers' imitation of foreign genre samples and their search for self-identification. The author attributes the audience success of horror films to the peculiarities of the perception of "life and death, the earthly and transcendental", formed under the influence of Orthodoxy (Poznin, 2023);

– E.A. Chichina sees the reason for the crisis of contemporary Russian cinema in its loss of socio-cultural identity. In her opinion, "Russian cinema has lost its identity over the past two decades. This was the result of the disappearance of specific ideological staples that defined the spirit of Soviet cinema for about seventy years, and the obscurity of value attitudes characteristic of the post-perestroika years" (Chichina, 2014: 18). She understands the cultural identity of Russian cinema as "the weaving of cinema into the system of cultural values, its existence in culture, which is a response to the challenge of the time, expressed in the actualization of certain themes" (Chichina, 2014: 18).

The analysis of research on the topic of the article has shown that at the end of the Soviet era, the conditions for the revival of Orthodox traditions – the existential foundations of Russian culture – were formed. This was reflected in the cinema of the late 1980s and early 1990s. At the same time, on the one hand, domestic cinematography was losing its national traits, which manifested itself in forgetting its own cultural traditions and imitating Western, Hollywood samples, and, on the other hand, caused some filmmakers to seek opportunities for self-identification. For example, in the feature films of the 1990s (*About Businessman Thomas* (Russia, 1993), *Don't play the fool...* (Russia, 1997), *Shall We Send a Messenger?* (1998) and others) reflected one of the key properties of the Russian mentality – the inseparability of man with nature and his native land.

4. Results

Features of the historical period of creation of feature films

In the years of "perestroika" (1985–1991) the reforms proclaimed by M.S. Gorbachev and the "policy of glasnost" were implemented. The democratization processes affected all spheres of life in the country. The Soviet government established relations with the West, initiated the processes of military disarmament, legalized private enterprise in the form of cooperatives, and in 1988 began the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. In the same year, the national celebration of the millennium of the baptism of Russia took place, foreign radio stations were no longer jammed, and the novel by B. Pasternak *Dr. Zhivago* was published. Pasternak's novel *Dr. Zhivago* was published. In 1989, for the first time in the USSR, partially free elections of people's deputies with alternative candidates were held.

In the late 1980s, an economic crisis began. The growth of industrial and agricultural production was reduced, the budget and commodity deficit increased, the population's income decreased, and food stamps were introduced. Against this background, workers' strikes took place in the country.

At the end of 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

Radical economic reforms of the 1990s led to a decline in production and income, rising unemployment, corruption and crime, and criminalization of economic spheres. The unstable situation in the Caucasus, the first (1994–1996) and second Chechen war (1999–2009) became a source of terrorist threat. Over the past 30 years, major terrorist acts were committed in Budennovsk, Kaspiysk, Volgodonsk, Moscow, Beslan, and St. Petersburg.

In the 2000s, President V.V. Putin carried out an administrative reform to improve the efficiency of public administration. In the 2000s, President V.V. Putin carried out administrative reforms to improve the efficiency of public administration, establish mechanisms for interaction between business and government, and improve mechanisms for combating corruption. The country began to implement federal-target programs and national projects aimed at improving

the lives of citizens. The situation in the economy has stabilized, GDP and household incomes have been growing.

The early 2010s saw the growth of the protest movement in Russia. After the elections to the State Duma of the VI convocation in 2011 and to the President in 2012, mass actions and speeches took place in the country. Protesters expressed their disagreement with the election results, accusing the authorities of non-transparency and unfairness.

Economic growth and increased budget revenues allowed the implementation of a number of large-scale projects: construction of the Vostochny Cosmodrome (2012–2016) and the Crimean Bridge (2016–2018), holding the 22nd Winter Olympic Games in Sochi (2014) and the 21st FIFA World Cup (2018). In the spring of 2014, Crimea was annexed to Russia, which provoked the imposition of economic and political sanctions by the United States and the European Union.

In 2020, the Constitution was amended to strengthen Russia's sovereignty and authoritarian potential.

The influence of historical events on the process of creating Soviet and Russian feature films of the second half of the 1980s – 2010s

The relaxation of censorship, and later its abolition, and the election of a new leadership of the USSR Union of Cinematographers (May 1986), less dependent on the Party and on Communist ideology, gave freedom to film workers. During this period, the cinema screens began to come out feature films in various forms denouncing the Soviet reality. In Danelia's *Kin-dza-dza* (Russia, 1986), in the conventional genre of fiction, the images of a decaying state, destroyed communication, spiritually impoverished world are openly recreated. In *Little Vera* (Russia, 1988), which became a kind of symbol of "perestroika", a frank bed scene was shown for the first time. Social vices became a constant motif of perestroika cinema, which told about the problems of alcoholism, drug addiction, crime and prostitution.

The titles of feature films of the late 1980s characterized the state of society: *City of Zero* (Russia, 1988), *Days of Eclipse* (Russia, 1988), *Asthenic Syndrome* (Russia, 1989). Their characters seem to have lost touch with the surrounding reality, lost in the timelessness. According to A.V. Fedorov, the film *Asthenic Syndrome* "shows the Russian social situation... that has turned people into hardened, disillusioned, deprived individuals of the state 'contingent'" (Fedorov, 2022: 27).

At the end of perestroika and the 1990s, there was a sharp deterioration in the material situation of the population. This situation was widely reflected in many films. For example, the heroes of E. Ryazanov's *Heaven is Promised* (Russia, 1991) are intellectuals who find themselves at the social bottom. Artist Fima, PhD. Solomon, pianist Fedya live in the dump, begging for alms. In one episode Fima says to a passerby: "...before you is a victim of communist terror. Give material support". In A. Konchalovsky's movie *Kurochka Ryaba* (1994, Russia, France), the inhabitants of an impoverished village are getting drunk, the collective farm where they used to work is closed. The protagonist, Asya Klyachina in a fit of anger states "rebuilt. No order. No intelligence. No conscience. There is nothing."

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, uncertainty, instability, disorder and the state's unlimited freedom of speech and action reigned in the country. The reality that emerged under these conditions took on a surrealistic appearance on the movie screen. The films *Pantsir* (Russia, 1990), *Kiks* (Russia, 1991), *Fascinations* (Russia; Ukraine, 1995), *Shirley-myrlly* (Russia, 1995) and others recreated absurd and ridiculous situations, unmotivated actions of characters deprived of any notion of normal life.

Lawlessness and crime were pernicious phenomena for our society during this period, which took on a mass character. They were interpreted differently on the movie screen. If in the 1990s (*Beyond the last line* (Russia, 1991), *Cruel Time* (Russia, 1996), *Ghoul* (Russia, 1997), *Brother* (Russia, 1997), *Mother, do not grieve* (Russia, 1997), *the Country of the Deaf* (1997) and others) were portrayed in a negative way ruthless and cynical bandits who unceremoniously carried out reprisals against anyone and in any way, then in the 2000s. (*Brat 2* (Russia, 2000), *Antikiller* (Russia, 2002), *Brigada* (Russia, 2002), *Boomer* (Russia, 2003), *Zhmurki* (Russia, 2005) and others) they became positive heroes whose cruelty and murders were justified by the struggle for justice, and their screen life acquired a nostalgic tinge.

Another painful theme of Russian cinema in the 1990s and 2000s (*Afghan Rift* (Russia; Italy, 1991), *Muslim* (Russia, 1995), *Prisoner of the Caucasus* (Russia; Kazakhstan, 1996), *War* (Russia, 2002), *My Half-Brother Frankenstein* (Russia, 2004) and others) was the Afghan and Chechen wars. The filmmakers told the story of the broken fates of soldiers unable to adapt to society in

peacetime. With a sense of bitter irony, they showed the senselessness and injustice of military actions, misunderstanding and rejection of former soldiers by their loved ones and officials.

In the 2000s and 2010s, political, economic and cultural life in the country changed markedly. While the economic system was relatively stabilized and developed, the vertical of power was strengthened, funding for social spheres increased, censorship restrictions intensified, and the administrative system continued to be inert and corrupt. This situation caused a critical reaction among filmmakers. They began to create pessimistic and cruel pictures about the Russian reality, which lacked mutual understanding and mercy. In one case, the characters in their films (*Koktebel* (Russia, 2003), *Picturing the Victim* (Russia, 2006), *Free Swimming* (Russia, 2006), *Tambourine-Baraban* (Russia, 2009), *Live* (Russia, 2012) and others) were young and middle-aged people who were unable to communicate, had no goals in life, and were not looking for a place in it. And in another case, middle-aged men trying to resist officials despite their indifference and hopelessness of the situation (*Fool* (Russia, 2014), *Leviathan* (Russia, 2014), *Arrhythmia* (Russia, 2017) and others).

With active state support and protectionist policies in the cultural sphere, commercial cinema has developed in Russia over the past two decades, creating idealized and glamorous images of the pre-revolutionary (*Admiral* (Russia, 2008), *Sunstroke* (Russia, 2014), *The Duelist* (Russia, 2016) and others), the Soviet past (*Legend No. 17* (Russia, 2013), *Upward Movement* (Russia, 2017), *Streltsov* (Russia, 2020) and others) and modernity (*Glyanets* (Russia, 2007), *Dukhleess* (Russia, 2011), *Pro Lubov* (Russia, 2015) and others).

The Russian Orthodox Church provided assistance to the development of Russian cinematography. With its participation, films (*Ostrov* (Russia, 2006), *Pop* (Russia, 2009), *Horde* (Russia, 2012) and others) were released that tell the story of the role and significance of Orthodox faith and religion in the fate of the individual and Russian history.

Ideology, worldview of the authors of feature films in the socio-cultural context

In the years of "perestroika" (1985–1991), which came after twenty years of "stagnation", communist ideology was losing its position. Filmmakers began to openly depict the evils of socialist society (prostitution, drug addiction, crime, corruption) and to give critical assessments of it. Many films (*Go and See* (Russia, 1985), *Cold Summer of Fifty-Three...* (Russia, 1987), *Dear Elena Sergeevna* (Russia, 1988), *Little Vera* (1988), *Rock Tragedy* (Russia, 1988), *Interdevochka* (Russia, 1989) and others) featured violent and realistic scenes and images that destroyed the audience's idealistic view of the past and present of Soviet reality. The author's message of these films had an edifying meaning – it awakened the consciousness of the mass audience, which had been put to sleep by idealized images of socialist reality.

In the post-Soviet decade, among the filmmakers who depicted the vicious aspects of Russian life and romanticized crime stories with enthusiasm, there were also those who thought about the meaning and causes of the upheavals in Russia. For example, V. Sergeyev and E. Ryazanov in *Genius* (Russia, 1991) and *Heaven is Promised* (Russia, 1991) reflected on the fate of a lost generation of talented people in an indifferent consumer society, K. Shakhnazarov in *Kingslayer* (Russia; United Kingdom, 1991), N. Mikhalkov in *Weary Sun* (Russia; France, 1994), A. German in *Khrustalev, Car!* (Russia; France, 1998) told about personal and moral responsibility – questions that are raised in works of art at all times.

Against the background of the crisis state of society in the 1990s, a notable phenomenon was the reflection of the peculiarities of national culture in the eyes of foreigners who appeared on the movie screens of those years. In the films *Russian Business* (Russia, 1993), *Peculiarities of National Hunting* (Russia, 1995), *Don't play the fool...* (Russia, 1997), *Peculiarities of National Fishing* (Russia, 1998) they looked with amazement at the turbulent, paradoxical and irrational life in Russia. Unfortunately, the authors who shot these pictures in the comedy genre had little interest in Russian traditions and the depths of Russian consciousness. They surprised foreigners not with high examples of culture, but with a bear riding a bicycle, the immeasurable amount of vodka and alcohol drunk, the ability of Russian people to find themselves in stupid situations and not follow the laws, etc.

The new generation of filmmakers (Y. Bykov, A. Zvyagintsev, A. Popogrebsky, V. Sigarev, B. Khlebnikov, and others) working in the direction of auteur, non-commercial cinema, characterized by a pessimistic outlook, shooting social dramas in which there is no hope, interpersonal and social ties are lost, and the surrounding reality is faceless, expressed their

position quite definitely: it is impossible for a normal person to live in an environment of soulless characters and in the space of a cultural vacuum.

In the 2010s. Russia saw a boom in sports blockbusters (*Legend No. 17* (Russia, 2013), *Upward Movement* (Russia, 2017), *Coach* (Russia, 2018), *Streltsov* (Russia, 2020), *World Champion* (Russia, 2021) and others) and military history films (*Brest Fortress* (Belarus; Russia, 2010), *Weary Sun 2: Predstoyanie* (Russia, 2010), *Stalingrad* (Russia, 2013), *Battle for Sevastopol* (Russia; Ukraine, 2015), *28 Panfilovtsev* (Russia, 2016), *Devyataev* (Russia, 2021) and others), many of which aroused the interest of a wide audience. The authors of these films with their optimistic worldview created an idealized reality in which the heroes resembling fairy-tale characters, not knowing fear, demonstrated iron character and miracles of survivability, readiness for self-sacrifice to save the life of another person and protect the homeland.

In the post-Soviet period, films about the existential experiences of a person coming to faith and historically significant events in the history of Russian Orthodoxy were released (*Now the Son of Man is Glorified* (1990), *I Trust in You* (1992), *Ostrov* (2006), *I Believe* (2009), *Tsar* (2009) by Lungin, *Miracle* (2009) by A. Proshkin, *Pop* (2009) by Khotinenko, *Superior* (2010), *Horde* (2012), *Monk and Demon* (2016) and others). They embodied the religious worldview of the authors with its Christian values of love, compassion and mercy, philosophical and mystical attitude to the human personality and the need for a spiritual search for the meaning of life. For the first time the Russian cinema screen showed what was forbidden in Soviet cinema: the images of a metropolitan and a foolish man performing healing of the human soul and body, mystical phenomena (miracles) causing awe in unwilling witnesses, repentance of a sinner bringing him purification of the soul.

Worldview of the characters portrayed in Soviet and Russian feature films of the second half of the 1980s – 2010s

The liberalization and democratization carried out in the era of "perestroika" gave people of different generations freedom not only from outdated ideological norms, but also from eternal values, creating a worldview crisis in society. Young people lost their understanding of the significance of the concepts of honor and dignity. On the movie screen, they were portrayed as an aimless, indifferent generation, rebelling against social norms and having lost faith and hope for the best. In the films *Assa* (Russia, 1987), *The Burglar* (Russia, 1987), *The Red Rose is an Emblem of Sadness*, *The Black Rose is an Emblem of Love* (Russia, 1989) and others, there appeared characters who had gone into the world of dreams and fantasies, who had lost touch with the older generation, and who belonged to different subcultures (punks, rockers, metallists, breakers and others). E. Ryazanov's film *Dear Elena Sergeevna* (Russia, 1988) shows a group of high school students, devoid of moral principles, humiliating their math teacher and inducing her to commit forgery.

The Russian cinema screen of the 1990s recreated a world of lawlessness, dominated by criminals and gangsters who valued money and power and sought to satisfy primitive needs. Positive characters in this world felt hopelessness and confusion, looking for a way to earn money for sustenance. Among them were heroes resisting the forces of evil, striving to restore justice, challenging the corrupt system (*Dyuba-Dyuba* (Russia, 1995), *Love in Russian* (Russia, 1995), *Brother* (Russia, 1997), *Voroshilovsky Shooter* (Russia, 1999) and others).

The commodity-money relations established in post-Soviet Russia, the cultural crisis of the 1980s-1990s, the lack of purposeful educational programs in schools and universities, and the spread of the Western ideology of individualism have led to the formation of material values, materialism, the cult of consumption, a cynical attitude to intellectual work, and the oblivion of moral and aesthetic ideals among new generations. Authorial, non-commercial cinematography of the 2000s and 2010s (*Koktebel* (Russia, 2003), *Picturing the Victim* (Russia, 2006), *Simple Things* (Russia, 2006), *Free Swimming* (Russia, 2006), *Euphoria* (Russia, 2006), *Yuriev Day* (2008), *Buben-Baraban* (Russia, 2009), *My Happiness* (Russia, 2010), *Boomerang Hearts* (Russia, 2011), *Shopito-show* (Russia, 2011), *Live* (Russia, 2012), *The geographer drank the globe* (Russia, 2013), *Long Happy Life* (Russia, 2013), *Fool* (Russia, 2014) and others) recreated this spiritual emptiness, showed idle and initiativeless characters, indifferent and indifferent both to others and to themselves.

In films of sports and military-historical themes in this period, the heroes became purposeful athletes and morally upstanding soldiers overcoming severe trials. In the conditions of constant struggle, resistance and warfare, they show human warmth and care to those around them, trying to preserve honor and dignity.

In post-Soviet religious films, laypeople, priests and monks show sincere love and mercy to people and believe in the justice of God's judgment. They do not represent the ideal of morality, but demonstrate the desire to achieve moral purity in a cruel and aggressive world.

Narrative structure and techniques in domestic feature films of the second half of the 1980s – 2010s

Place and time of action. The place of action in feature films during the period under review changed markedly. If, for example, during the "perestroika" era and the first post-Soviet decade, scenes involving characters of different ages (schoolchildren, young people, adults and the elderly) were filmed on abandoned construction sites and rock concerts, in cramped rooms and dirty entrances, then in the 2000s and 2010s they were transferred to cozy apartments, houses and cafes, new gyms and playgrounds. The feature films of this period reflected several epochs of Russian history: the distant past – the pagan pre-Christian period, the 19th century, the Soviet past, modernity and the distant future.

Characteristic settings and everyday objects. The everyday life depicted in feature films of the late twentieth century is a symbol of decay. The characters live in modest conditions, in houses and apartments with peeling walls, old furniture, rusty bathtubs, in communal apartments with high ceilings and large doors, wooden closets and classical-style bureaux reminiscent of the passing Soviet era.

In the domestic environment in the films of the first two decades of the 20th century, the signs of division into the world of the "poor" and the world of the "rich" were clearly expressed: some characters have old dwellings with dilapidated furniture, while others have modern, expensive apartments and houses with exquisite interiors.

Genre modifications. In the second half of the 1980s–1990s, one of the signs of the times was the genre of social drama, which exposed the vices of society. During these years, films were made in the genre of social satire, "grassroots" variations of the genres of comedy and melodrama, telling about Russian life in the style of postmodern irony, absurdity, and phantasmagoria.

In the 2000s and 2010s, domestic films of mass genres were released in Russian distribution: comedy and action films, disaster films, military-historical dramas, melodramas, musicals, sci-fi, and horror. In the 2010s, about four dozen high-budget historical and sports-themed films were released in the drama and action genre. The dramaturgy of many of these films was built to Hollywood standards.

Non-commercial, auteur films during this period were made in the social drama genre.

Stereotypical methods of depicting reality: In the period from the beginning of "perestroika" to the 2000s, authors used the techniques of so-called "blackness", showing brutal violence, cold-blooded murders, drug addiction and prostitution. In the 2000s and 2010s, Russian cinema screens showed signs of socially critical portrayal of reality, on the one hand, and its embellishment and idealization, on the other.

Character Typology:

– *Social status, profession and marital status of the character:* In films of the late twentieth century, it is not uncommon for characters to occupy a marginal position in society, and single-parent families are shown. People of intellectual labor have either already lost their jobs or live modestly on low wages. School teachers are victimized by students. Many of them still act as a model of high morality and show patience and love for children. The idealized image of the Soviet policeman has gradually been replaced by the figure of a werewolf in pursuit, brutally killing everyone who gets in his way.

In the 2000s and 2010s, there were more positive characters in Russian feature films who had a profession, family and children, and medium and high social status.

– *The appearance, clothing, and personality traits of the characters.* Positive characters have an intelligent appearance, dressed modestly, sometimes unkempt and sometimes neat. Their character traits were different, sometimes even opposite: in some movies they show purposefulness, perseverance, in others, on the contrary, passivity and self-containment. In communication are polite and courteous, but occasionally allow foul language – in cases where they deeply feel injustice in any situation.

Negative characters are rude, deceitful, self-serving, with repulsive appearance. They are characterized by: laziness, greed, avarice, desire to achieve material wealth. In communication they use slang and slang expressions, foul language.

The model of cultural identity represented in Russian cinema of the second half of the 1980s – 2010s includes five types of cinematic discourse: interpersonal, artistic-aesthetic, religious-ideological, historical-cultural and mythological.

An interpersonal type of cinematic discourse.

Traditional in Russian culture features and types of diminutive-lascivious appeals were reflected in the feature films of "perestroika" and the post-Soviet period.

For example, the anthropomorphic address "dove", the tradition of using which was interrupted during the years of revolution and civil war, can be heard in postwar films: *Rumyantsev's Case* (Russia, 1955), *Carnaval Night* (Russia, 1956), *Beware, Grandma* (Russia, 1960), *Run* (Russia, 1970) and in modern screen adaptations of Russian classical literature (*Ragin* (Russia, 2004), *Ivanov* (Russia, 2010) and others).

Another address characterized by simplicity and trustworthiness are the words "father", "son", "my dear". They can be found in military-historical films, in which the relationship between junior and senior soldiers is warm and respectful. For example, in the films *Tired by the Sun-2. Predstoyanie* (Russia, 2010), *Tired by the Sun-3. Citadel* (Russia, 2011), *Stalingrad* (Russia, 2013) and others.

A distinctive feature of interpersonal communication in Russian culture is soulfulness and confessionality. However, in modern Russian films, the desire to speak out, to "talk to each other" is not common among the characters. One of the rare examples of such relationships is A. Konchalovsky's *White Nights*. Konchalovsky's *White Nights of the Postman Alexei Tryapitsyn* (Russia, 2014). Its characters – residents of a small village – tell each other about the difficulties in their lives and share their innermost feelings. In one of the scenes, an elderly man confesses to the local letter carrier: "there is pain in my soul all the time... I can't have fun... like everyone else. For some reason, my whole life has been spent in a kind of patience." The letter carrier replies: "Sometimes you lie down... such a longing comes over you."

For Russian people, the opinion of others is of great importance. Characters in Russian films, arguing their position, may refer to the opinion of neighbors, fellow villagers or acquaintances, appeal to "the people", in the presence of people may talk about their family relations, point out someone's advantages or disadvantages. For example, in the movies *Kurochka Ryaba* (Russia; France, 1994), *Don't play the fool...* (Russia, 1997), *Yar* (Russia, 2007) *Live and Remember* (Russia, 2008) and others there are such expressions: "people are kind", "what will people say?", "I live among people, what will I tell them?", "how can I look people in the eye?", "you live among people". In these phrases, the word people indicates collectivism, nationality – the features of Russian culture that retain their traditional meaning.

Artistic and aesthetic type of cinematic discourse

In many Russian films of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, which tell about village life, the characteristic properties of Russian cultural identity are expressed: love of space, freedom-loving, unity with nature, asceticism and simplicity.

In the films of director V. Chikov (*About the Businessman Thomas* (Russia, 1993), *Don't Make a Fool of Yourself* (Russia, 1995), *Shall We Send a Messenger?* (Russia, 1998) images of rural life are created in the tradition of "village cinema" of the 1960s – 1970s. There are recognizable images of Russian nature in the frame: spring thaw and roadlessness, green flowering meadows stretching into the horizon, boundless sky and a wide river bend reflecting it, melting haze on the temple and wooden huts. Panoramic plans of measured village life recreate the idyll of the Russian province. The landscape "acts as the original bosom of life", and "harmonious rootedness in the landscape of the homeland conditions the hero's living of his life" (Voskresenskaya, 2024: 539-540).

In Soviet and Russian cinematography, the poetic tradition of idyllic depictions of nature is juxtaposed with the tradition of recreating melancholic Central Russian landscapes on the screen. This can be illustrated by the films *Smoke* (Germany; Russia, 1992), *Kurochka Ryaba* (Russia; France, 1994), *Ivanov's* (Russia, 2010), and *Once Upon a Time There Was a Woman* (Russia, 2011), which depict "Russian longing. The panoramic shots show fading autumn nature, gray sky reflected in the water surface of puddles, endless snow-covered fields and a dirt road running off into the distance. A long song sung by a lone female voice is heard in the background.

Another Russian image of nature was the scenes of fair festivities and folk fun in N. Mikhalkov's *The Barber of Siberia* (Russia; France; Italy; Czech Republic, 1998). The film embodies Kustodiev's landscapes. On the background of snow-white expanses bright colors of

balagans and carousel tents, skomorokhi and parsley, sable furs, pancakes with black caviar, fist fights, accordion playing, running of a horse troika and ringing of bells, circus bear and fireworks. The scope and spontaneity of the Shrovetide festivities recreates the atmosphere of merriment and unbridled joy that reigned in Russia during the holidays.

Religious-ideological type of cinematic discourse.

Despite the atheistic censorship that existed in our country for seven decades, the heritage and traditions of Orthodox culture were represented in Soviet cinema, and during the years of the Great Patriotic War and at the end of the "perestroika" era, it was possible to speak directly and openly about religious feelings and show church sacraments in movies. For example, in the last scene of S. Solovyov's film *Black Rose – Emblem of Sorrow, Red Rose – Emblem of Love* (Russia, 1989), a priest tells several characters the Gospel story of the Baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist and shows a diafilm depicting its events. Then he performs the Sacrament of Baptism in a communal apartment over the main character, the teenager Mitya, a hereditary nobleman and Komsomol member who dreams of entering the Nakhimov Naval School. This is the epilogue of a surrealist movie that depicts an optimistic picture of a country experiencing yet another historical cataclysm.

In the 1990s and 2000s, films were released in Russia in which the authors addressed the problems of the search for God and the revival of Orthodox traditions. The final scene of *Boys* (Russia, 1990) shows the rite of consecration of a temple, in front of which people stand with lit candles – a symbolic image of Russia's spiritual revival. The hero of the film *Infinity* (Russia, 1991) is tormented by thoughts about the finiteness of life and a sense of fear of death, which leads him to the temple, to the priest, with whom he talks about events from his past. In the film *Don't play the fool...* (Russia, 1997), a burning barn collapses and behind it a view of the temple standing on a hill is revealed – a symbolic image of the renewal of life for the villagers and the whole country. In the movie *Diary of a Kamikaze* (Russia, 2002) the characters talk about sin and God's punishment, and one of the characters, Maxim Krivoshein, reads the Lord's Prayer before going to bed. The characters in *Yar* (Russia, 2007) make requests to God, to the Mother of God, asking for forgiveness, praying, quoting the Holy Scriptures.

Christian ideas were fully expressed in the film adaptation of Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot* (Russia, 2003), in the films *Ostrov* (Russia, 2006) and *Pop* (Russia, 2009). In them, the authors moved away from external forms of morality to the inner space of the spiritual quest of the heroes. The depth and strength of their faith is revealed not so much in their deeds and actions as in their reflections (on sin and repentance, patience and humility, testing and purification, love and forgiveness, mercy and compassion), facial expressions, eye movements, and voice intonation.

A characteristic feature of Russian folk culture is dual faith – the coexistence of Orthodox and pagan traditions. Modern Russian cinematography demonstrates examples of folk beliefs, conspiracies, fortune-telling, and mystical phenomena. The authors of the film *Wild Field* (Russia, 2008) emphasize the Christian virtues of the protagonist, who heals local residents, leads an ascetic lifestyle, and performs rituals that help tame the natural elements. At the beginning of the movie *Once upon a time there was a woman* (Russia, 2011) two scenes are mounted in parallel, in one of which a wedding ceremony is performed in a church, and in the other elderly women perform a conspiracy over the newlyweds' bed: they spread straw, cover it with a sheet and a blanket, put a hen's egg under the blanket, beat the bed with a broom made of branches and ask the saints to banish the demon. The movie *White Tiger* (Russia, 2012) is based on the mystical story of the Great Patriotic War about an invincible German ghost tank, suddenly appearing and disappearing in different places of combat operations. The Soviet military command decided to send a crew headed by a mechanic-driver to destroy it, who is considered "conspiratorial" because "shells don't hit it".

Today, many people in Russia consider Orthodox rites to be a formality, a tribute to historical and cultural memory, and do not participate in them out of the "dictates of the heart. In V. Sigarev's movie *Live* (Russia, 2012), the rite of marriage is performed by people who do not believe and do not understand the meaning of this sacrament. They take this step in the hope of being cured of HIV infection. Symbolically, during the wedding, the atmosphere in the temple is not festive, the scene is shot in gray, the characters' faces are bored, and the candle goes out at Artem's wedding.

Historical and cultural type of cinematic discourse.

In the *post-perestroika* period of cultural and spiritual crisis, when society lost its ideas about the role and importance of morality and moral values, N. Mikhalkov made the film *The Barber of Siberia* (Russia, France, Italy, Czech Republic, 1998), which tells the story of pre-revolutionary times and people who highly value the concept of duty, defend their honor in duels, are ready to accept the heavy burden of fate and are able to sacrifice themselves to the Motherland. Russia in the movie appears as the territory of the broad Russian soul and brotherhood, strong spirit and high ideals, and the main character, Andrei Tolstoy – an exponent of moral purity and irrational spontaneity. Not tolerating the insult from the general, he struck him on the head with a violin bow, for which he was sent to penal servitude. The promotional slogan for the movie says, "He's Russian. That explains a lot..."

The images of Russian officers and noblemen demonstrating examples of high honor, duty and dignity are recreated in the films *Admiral* (Russia, 2008) and *The Duelist* (Russia, 2016).

In one of the scenes of the movie *Admiral*, the fighting officers of the Russian Imperial Navy in white tunics, with nobility and courage, keeping loyalty to the Tsar, are contrasted with the unshaven, insolent, cynical and uncouth sailors who joined the rebellious revolutionaries. Differences in their appearance and behavior are emphasized by the authors in order to express the images of high culture that was lost when the Bolsheviks came to power. The movie *Duelist* begins with a frame describing the dueling code of the Russian Empire. At the heart of its plot is the story of the relationship between the nobles, who have no right to lie, refuse to duel, and, restoring their honor in deadly duels.

The communal way of life was an inherent feature of the Russian people and manifested itself in family life. An example of family and clan communal relations is presented in the films *Roy* (Russia, 1990) and *Dom* (Russia, 2011). The movie *Roy* tells the story of the Zavarzin family, who settled and lived for decades in the Siberian lands with clear rivers and endless forests. At one of the feasts, the eldest son Ivan makes a speech: "We are the Zavarzins. We all left this house and must return to it, and we will live swarming...". But fate had its own way. The only income-generating family business - beekeeping - perished. A parasitic disease killed the bee family, and the Zavarzin family fell into the arms of fatalism, one of the inherent properties of the Russian soul.

The movie *House* (Russia, 2011) tells about the destruction of the Shamanov family living in a large house surrounded by the vast Don steppes. Not far from the house at night barking wolves, which are hunted by men. The overlord father beats his sons, the sons beat their wives. On the occasion of the centennial of the oldest man, his son, grandchildren and great-grandchildren gather in the house. Unexpectedly, his eldest grandson Victor arrives from Moscow, a bandit who brings assassins after him. Among the faceless landscape of fields receding into the horizon, they carry out the massacre of the Shamanov family. This is its fatal fate.

The idea of compassion for the weak, defenseless, "little" man is traditional for Russian culture. In Soviet cinema, the "little man" as a type of character was an exception, but in the perestroika and post-Soviet period he became the hero of the films *Boys* (Russia, 1990), *In That Country* (Russia, 1997), *The Land of the Deaf* (Russia; France, 1997), *Mu-mu* (Russia, 1998), *Voroshilovsky Rifleman* (Russia, 1999), *Secondary People* (Ukraine, 2001) and others. Gogol's Dostoevsky version of this character, who survived the transformation into a despot and a battering ram, is depicted in A. Sokurov's films *Moloch* (Russia, Germany, Japan, Italy, France, 1999) and *Taurus* (Russia, 2001). The actors in them were Hitler and Lenin – nervous, weak-willed, unable to cope with everyday affairs.

A mythological type of cinematic discourse.

In the middle of the 19th century, a philosophical and ideological trend was born in Russia, which was called "pochvennichestvo". It was based on Christian values and developed the ideas of rootedness of the people, their connection with their native land, traditional way of life and unity of different social strata of society. The main mythologemes that embodied these ideas in art include the images of the river, the tree, and the house. The river is an image of the ever-flowing life of the people, rooted in one place, the unity of their past, present and future. Tree – a symbol of life and family, the connection of the lower and higher worlds. The house is a repository of family traditions and family ties.

After several decades of oblivion in Soviet culture, the ideas of soilvennost have been revived in "rustic prose" and "rustic cinema". In contemporary Russian cinema, although they are no longer relevant, they are reflected in certain screen works. For example, in the movie *Don't play the*

fool... (Russia, 1997), "the river (the motif of current time, life, even eternity...), a quiet street, hilly banks, shoals" create "a natural environment that has existed 'always', supporting the image of the state of mind of a person: a person in eternity..." (Zaitseva, 2018: 150-151).

In M. Razbezhkina's film *Yar* (Russia, 2007), the viewer is confronted with "striking in its poetry and drama pictures of the folk-soil Russian life with its half-pagan – half-Christian coloring... It is in the people that the truths of life on earth are kept..., the idea of natural justice..., developed by the entire life of the people, inseparable from the existence of nature" (Gasheva, 2012: 93).

In the film by K. Serebrennikov's film *Yuriev Day* (Russia, 2008) the "Russian idea" was expressed, "which is presented in the figurative structure of the film as the need for the cultural personality to return to the "soil" in order to choose humility and suffering by sharing the people's fate, sacrificing oneself, renouncing oneself and one's own ambitions for exclusivity" (Gasheva, 2012: 93).

One of the key themes of Russian feature films is the Great Patriotic War, cherished by historical memory and called "sacred" in the song of the same name. Its image is recreated in the films *Brestskaya Fortress* (Belarus, Russia, 2010), *Weary Sun-2. Predstoyanie* (2010, directed by N. Mikhalkov), *White Tiger* (Russia, 2012), *Stalingrad* (Russia, 2013), *Battle for Sevastopol* (Russia, 2015), *28 Panfilovtsev* (Russia, 2016), *T-34* (Russia, 2018), *Rzhev* (Russia, 2018), magnifying the feat of the people who defeated fascism. Modern filmmakers give epic forms to military actions, depicting soldiers as mythological heroes defending their homeland to their last breath. They present the mythologized image of the people's exploit in a simplified and far from "trench truth" form. Meanwhile, the representation of the national mythologeme of the Great Patriotic War in a heroic way by art cinema is an effective tool for preserving collective memory.

5. Conclusion

The cultural traditions formed in centuries-old history were (with all known losses) preserved in the Soviet period, remain relevant in modern conditions and are reflected in the feature films of "perestroika" and post-Soviet times.

In the interpersonal relations of the characters in the feature films of the period under review, the manifestations of sincerity and frankness, soulfulness and confessionality, traditional for domestic culture, diminutive and affectionate types of address expressing kindness, warmth and tenderness ("dove", "father", "son", "my darling" and others) have become a rarer phenomenon compared to the "thaw" and "stagnation" eras.

The modern Russian cinema screen reflected and constructed the relationship between man and society in the context of the changing social and political situation. In the context of cultural crisis and economic recession, Orthodox traditions and the culture of the nobility became relevant. In different forms, they were embodied in films depicting church sacraments, narrating about characters on a spiritual quest, making requests to God, praying at home and in the temple, quoting the Holy Scriptures. The heroes of historical films about pre-revolutionary times are characters who highly value the concept of duty, show examples of high honor, are ready to accept the heavy burden of fate and are able to sacrifice themselves to the Motherland.

The Russian cinema reflects the ideas of soil science: the unity and rootedness of the people, their connection with their native land. Despite the loss of national flavor, the modern screen images of the Russian countryside retain the natural environment that conveys the feeling of life of "man in eternity".

The theme of the Great Patriotic War is one of the key themes for Russian cinema. Its images have changed over time and today have acquired a mythological tinge, having lost the poignancy of interpersonal relationships and plot lines of the films of the 1950s-1970s. Nevertheless, modern Russian military-historical films demonstrate the feat of the people, preserving the collective memory of it.

6. Acknowledgements

This research was funded by the grant of the Russian Science Foundation (RSF, project No. 23-28-00128) at Rostov State University of Economics. Project theme: "Transformation of the Model of Cultural Identity Represented in Soviet and Russian Cinematography in the 20th – Early 21st Centuries". Head of the project is R.V. Salny.

References

- Brashinsky, 1994** – *Brashinsky, M.I.* (1994). Puti demokratizacii kinokul'tury v epokhuperestrojki 1986–1991 [Paths of Democratization of Film Culture in the Era of Perestroika 1986–1991]. Ph.D. Dis. St.Petersburg. [in Russian]
- Breitman, 2004** – *Breitman, A.S.* (2004). Rossijskoe kinoiskusstvo: problema sokhraneniya tsennostej russkoj kul'tury [Russiaincinema: the problem of preserving the values of Russian culture]. Ph.D. Dis. Veliky Novgorod. [in Russian]
- Chelysheva, 2017** – *Chelysheva, I.V.* (2017). Germenevticheskij analiz sovetskix igrovyykh fil'mov epokhi perestrojki (1985–1991) na shkol'nyyu temu [Hermeneutic analysis of Soviet feature films of the perestroika era (1985–1991) on the school theme]. *Crede Experto*. 4: 242-261. [in Russian]
- Chichina, 2014** – *Chichina, E.A.* (2014). Sovermennyyi otechestvennyy kinematograf: novaya identichnost' [Contemporary Russian cinematography: new identity]. *News of Universities. North Caucasus Region. Series: Social Sciences*. 1(179): 17-24. [in Russian]
- Eco, 2005** – *Eco, U.* (2005). The Role of the Reader. Studies on the Semiotics of the Text. St. Petersburg.
- Fedorov, 2013** – *Fedorov, A.V.* (2013). Transformacii obraza Rossii na zapadnom ekrane: ot epohi ideologicheskoy konfrontacii (1946–1991) do sovremennogo etapa (1992–2010) [Transformation of the Image of Russia on the Western Screen: from the Epoch of Ideological Confrontation (1946-1991) to the Modern Stage (1992–2010)]. Moscow. [in Russian]
- Fedorov, 2015** – *Fedorov, A.V.* (2015). Mediaobrazovanie: istoriya i teoriya [Media Education: History and Theory]. Moscow. [in Russian]
- Fedorov, 2022** – *Fedorov, A.V.* (2022). Nashe raznoe kino [Our different cinema]. Moscow. [in Russian]
- Gasheva, 2012** – *Gasheva, N.N.* (2012). Sovremennoe rossijskoe kino: kul'turologicheskij aspekt [Contemporary Russian Cinema: Cultural Aspect]. *Bulletin of the Kemerovo State University of Culture and Arts*. 21: 90-100. [in Russian]
- Khrenov, 2022** – *Khrenov, N.A.* (2022). Pozdnesovetskij kinematograf: stanovlenie obrazavremeni kak priznaka transformiruyushhejsya poe'tiki [Late Soviet cinema: formation of the image-time as a sign of transforming poetics]. In: *Change of Milestones: Domestic Cinema of the Mid-1980s – 1990s*. Moscow: 11-48. [in Russian]
- Kolesnikova, 2021** – *Kolesnikova, A.G.* (2021). Obraz sovetskogo proshlogo v igrovom kino epokhi perestrojki [The Image of the Soviet past in feature films of the perestroika era]. *Gramota*. 10: 2029-2032. [in Russian]
- Maler, 2023** – *Maler, A.M.* (2023). Khristianskie motivy v sovetskom kino [Christian motives in Soviet cinema]. *Ortodoksiya*. 1: 156-245. DOI: 10.53822/2712-9276-2023-1-156-245 [in Russian]
- Parkhomenko, 2009** – *Parkhomenko, Ya.A.* (2009). Sovremennyyi rossijskij kinematograf v kontekste kul'turnogo processa kontsa 1990-x – nachala 2000-x gg. [Contemporary Russian cinema in the context of the cultural process of the late 1990s – early 2000s]. *Theater. Painting. Cinema. Music*. 4: 137-150. [in Russian]
- Poznin, 2023** – *Poznin, V.F.* (2023). Stanovlenie rossijskogo zhanrovogo kino v nachale XXI v. [Formation of Russian genre cinema at the beginning of the 21st century]. *Bulletin of St. Petersburg University. Art Criticism*. 13(3): 535-556. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu15.2023.308> [in Russian]
- Silverblatt, 2001** – *Silverblatt, A.* (2001). Media Literacy. Westport, Connecticut – London: Praeger.
- Voskresenskaya, 2024** – *Voskresenskaya, V.V.* (2024). Nacional'nyi landshaft v otechestvennyx kinokomediyaх o derevne 1990-x godov: “derevenskaya trilogiya” V. Chikova [National landscape in domestic village comedies of the 1990s: V. Chikov's “Village Trilogy”]. *Art Culture*. 1: 534-553. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51678/2226-0072-2024-1-534-553> [in Russian]
- Zaitseva, 2018** – *Zaitseva, L.A.* (2018). Rossijskij kinematograf 90-x v poiskax zritelya [Russian cinema of the 90s in search of a viewer]. Moscow. [in Russian]